

Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC

Concerning RM-10867

Distinguished Commissioners,

I would like to thank you for the chance to make my comments on this very emotional and controversial issue.

My name is John R. Sheets and I'm a licensed Extra Class ham radio operator N8QGC. I've given this issue much more thought than these few lines will show.

I initially thought that this was not acceptable; I did not look at this issue through the eyes of logic. I took a very emotional stance backed by tradition and opposed any change to the Amateur radio service rules. When I digested all of the proposed comments that were sent to you then and only then did I really develop a more logical opinion that I'd like to share with you today.

I was first licensed in 1991 under the new and very controversial no-code tech license. We (the no-coders) were supposed to be the death of ham radio. Through the years I believe that the vast majority of anyone who has come in under this class of license has gone on to make quality contributions to the hobby. Of course some may not have but this is true of any dynamic.

I upgraded passing my 5 WPM and General Theory in September of 2002 at the same testing session. The next month, October 2002, I passed my Extra Theory and gained my Extra License. I illustrate all this, as I believe that had a no-code tech license not have been offered I'd still be operating in the part 95 citizens band. The forward thinking that existed in the commission in the late 80's and early 90's is what allowed me to enter into and thrive in a hobby that I truly enjoy.

Knowing that change is inevitable, and that you must always try to remain forward thinking, I respectfully submit to you the following comments regarding the ARRL's petition.

I support it 100 percent. I believe it to be the best compromise that is being offered and hope that you'll accept it as it is written and amend it as such.

I believe that the Morse code requirement is very important to ham radio not as a barrier, but as a reminder of tradition, duty, and to a lesser extent elite status. To be an Extra Class you should have to show proficiency in Morse code. I believe this to be in keeping with the spirit of ham radio and the very class of the Armature Extra license itself. I affirm that many times I've made contacts in CW that would not have been possible in any other mode and as such submit to you that it still plays a vital importance in the service as being the only mode of communications that is as close to 100 percent reliable

as possible. For this very reason it is crucial that the very attainable 5 wpm Morse code requirement remain in place for the Extra Class exam as well as the Theory test.

Other points have been made by other respondents as to the importance of CW in the post 9/11 world. I agree with them, when the towers fell in New York City on that tragic day cell phones died, so did many other communications. CW is important, even in a high tech world. As illustrated by those terrible events high tech communication can and will fail. When all else fails CW in it's plain and very boring no-frills essence will work when nothing else will.

Again, I support the ARRL petition 100 percent and respectfully request that you amend it as written.

Sincerely,

John R. Sheets, N8QGC